

BENEFITS NEWS

An Information Publication for State of California Employees

Open Enrollment is Sept. 15 – Oct. 15

The 2004 open enrollment period for dental plans, FlexElect reimbursement accounts, and cash options is Sept. 15 – Oct. 15. Changes and enrollments made during this period take effect Jan. 1, 2005.

Do I have to do anything for open enrollment?

Dental Plans: You don't need to do anything unless you want to change plans, cancel coverage, or add/cancel dependents on your plan. If you're not currently enrolled in a dental plan and are eligible to do so, you may enroll during open enrollment.

Reimbursement Accounts: You may sign up for a FlexElect reimbursement account for medical and/or dependent care expenses. If you currently have an account and want to continue it for 2005, you must re-enroll during open enrollment.

Cash Options: If you already receive a cash option in lieu of health and/or dental benefits, you don't need to do anything unless you want to cancel it or change cash options; otherwise, you'll automatically be re-enrolled for 2005.

(Exception: If you're a Permanent Intermittent employee, you must re-enroll during open enrollment if you want to remain in the program next year.) Eligible employees not currently receiving a cash option also may enroll during this time.

Dental Plans

There are three types of dental plans to choose from:

- indemnity
- preferred provider
- prepaid

DeltaPremier is the State's indemnity dental plan. It features full access to specialty care and guaranteed benefits. You can see any dentist worldwide, but your benefits are maximized when you receive services from a Delta dentist.

DeltaPreferred Option (DPO) is the State's preferred provider plan. It offers services through its network of participating dentists, but you can see any dentist of your choice worldwide if you're willing to pay a higher fee. The DPO has lower copays and higher benefits for many services than the indemnity plan. Your current dentist may be in the DPO network. However, not all Delta dentists are in DPO's network.

- For details on the Delta plans, call 1-800-225-3368 or visit www.deltadentalca.org/state.

PMI and **Safeguard** are the State's two prepaid plans. If you're covered by a prepaid plan, you must use dentists from that plan's network, located only in California. The monthly premium for a prepaid plan is paid entirely by the State, and most basic services are covered at no cost to you.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2005, **Safeguard** and the **Health Net** prepaid dental plan will consolidate into the **Safeguard** plan, offering two levels of benefits: *Standard* and *Enhanced*. The **Health Net** dental plan name will no longer be used and its provider network will be merged into the **Safeguard** network.

- For details on the **PMI** plan, call 1-800-422-4234 or visit www.deltadentalca.org.
- For details on **Safeguard's** plan, call 1-800-880-1800 or visit www.safeguard.net.

Dental Plan Premiums

Premiums for both Delta dental plans will remain at current levels in 2005 (see the following charts). Premiums for PMI and Safeguard's *Standard* plan will increase, with the State paying 100% of the premiums for both prepaid plans.

2005 Monthly Dental Premiums

DeltaPremier - Basic (for rank-and-file employees)			
	Employee Share	State Share	Total Premium*
1-party	\$11.36	\$34.09	\$45.45
2-party	20.00	59.98	79.98
Family	29.00	86.99	115.99
DeltaPremier - Enhanced (for excluded employees)			
	Total Premium*		
1-party	\$47.31		
2-party	94.03		
Family	132.27		

DeltaPreferred Option (for rank-and-file and excluded employees)			
	Employee Share	State Share	Total Premium*
1-party	\$ 9.97	\$29.92	\$39.89
2-party	19.54	58.63	78.17
Family	29.49	88.45	117.94

* For employees in CoBen, which covers all excluded employees and rank-and-file employees in certain bargaining units, "State share" and "employee share" do not apply. The total premium amount is deducted from the CoBen allowance, described further down.

Reimbursement Accounts

FlexElect reimbursement accounts are a great way to save money for medical and/or dependent care expenses and lower your taxes.

How does it work? You decide an amount of money to be deducted from your paycheck to go into a reimbursement account. This money is not taxable. You reimburse yourself from this account for bills you would otherwise have to pay using taxable income. (See Aug. 2004 issue of *Benefits News* for more on reimbursement accounts.)

Medical Accounts: This account covers certain out-of-pocket health-related expenses for you and your dependents. The minimum monthly deduction is \$10. The maximum is \$5,000/year. Examples of eligible expenses are office visit and prescription copays (but not out-of-pocket premiums), orthodontic work, hearing aids, laser eye surgery, and more.

Dependent Care Accounts: This account covers certain expenses for child and elder care. The minimum monthly deduction is \$20. The maximum (per household) is \$5,000/year.

Read more about reimbursement accounts in the FlexElect handbook, available at DPA's Web site (www.dpa.ca.gov) under Publications. Enrollment forms are available at the back of the handbook, from your personnel office, and on our Web site.

Cash Options

If you have health and/or dental coverage through another source such as your spouse, domestic partner, or former employer, you may choose to receive taxable cash in your paycheck in lieu of your State health and/or dental benefit.

This "cash option" is administered by the FlexElect program or the CoBen program, depending on your classification: excluded employees enroll for the cash option through CoBen, as do rank-and-file employees in Bargaining Units 2, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, and 19.

Rank-and-file employees in the bargaining units not listed above enroll in the cash option through FlexElect.

Cash option enrollment forms are available from your personnel office and from the appropriate handbook (FlexElect or CoBen, depending on which program applies to your job class.). These forms also are available on DPA's Web site.

2005 CoBen Allowance Amounts

Under the Consolidated Benefits program, or CoBen, eligible employees receive a monthly allowance to pay for health, dental, and vision benefits. All excluded employees and employees represented by Bargaining Units 2, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are in CoBen.

The amount of your CoBen allowance is based on whether you choose coverage for yourself only, or also for a spouse or dependents. If the combined monthly cost of health, dental, and vision benefits is less than your CoBen allowance, you receive the excess amount in your paycheck as taxable income. If the combined cost of these benefits exceeds your allowance, you pay the difference, which shows up as a pre-tax deduction on your paycheck.

(Vision coverage is mandatory and is covered by the CoBen allowance.)

The CoBen allowance for excluded employees is set by DPA. For rank-and-file employees in bargaining units covered by CoBen, the allowance amount is determined through collective bargaining.

Bargaining Units 8, 16, 17, and 19 have reached agreement on their 2005 CoBen allowance. Units 2, 7, and 18 have not reached agreement as of the time this *Benefits News* was issued, and will continue to receive their current CoBen allowance pending such agreement.



The charts below show the 2005 allowance amounts for all employees covered by CoBen.

Monthly CoBen Allowances

Excluded Employees		
	Current (2004)	2005
1-party	\$302	\$328
2-party	593	643
Family	768	836

Bargaining Units 8, 16, 17, and 19		
	Current (2004)	2005
1-party	\$300	\$327
2-party	582	633
Family	756	824

Bargaining Units 2, 7, and 18		
	Current (2003/04)	2005
1-party	\$266	\$266
2-party	515	515
Family	679	679

To help you calculate your benefit cost (or excess cash) under CoBen, DPA has provided an online calculator on our Web site. Go to www.dpa.ca.gov and click on Benefits, then Consolidated Benefits. Scroll down until you see the links for CoBen calculators and choose the appropriate link.

There's also a worksheet in the CoBen handbook that you can use in lieu of the online calculator. The handbook is available from your personnel office and on DPA's Web site, under Publications.



For More Information

DPA Benefits Division
(916) 322-0300
CALNET 492-0300

ARAG Group
Group Legal Services Plan
1-800-247-4184

State Dental Program
(916) 324-0525
CALNET 454-0525

State Employee Assistance Program
MBC (Merit Behavioral Care)
1-800-632-7422

State FlexElect Program
(916) 327-6429
CALNET 467-6429

Health Promotion Program
(916) 324-9398
CALNET 454-9398

Merit Award Program
(916) 324-0522
CALNET 454-0522

Rural Health Care Equity Program
(916) 327-1439
CALNET 467-1439

Savings Plus Program
1-866-566-4777

www.dpa.ca.gov/contact_spp/

Vision Service Plan
(916) 445-9841

CALNET 485-9841

Workers' Compensation Program
(916) 445-9792
CALNET 485-9792

DPA Fax Numbers

Benefits Division
(916) 322-3769
CALNET 492-3769

Savings Plus Program
(916) 327-1885
CALNET 467-1885

TDD (Any unit in DPA)
(916) 327-4266
CALNET 467-4266

Internet Address

www.dpa.ca.gov